



Local Government Association
of South Australia

Community Information Session

Council Amalgamation Plebiscite

Welcome and introduction

- Andrew Lamb, Director Advocacy
- Tami Norman, Program Leader Governance
- Acknowledgement of Country

Session outline

- About the LGA
- The Plebiscite – what is it?
- The investigation process
- Questions

About the Local Government Association (LGA)

- Membership organisation
- Service and support to member councils
- Guided by LGA Board of Directors
- Supported by staff
- Advocacy is a key role

Amalgamations – LGA endorsed policy

Amalgamations should only occur on a voluntary basis, where there is the support of council and their communities and strong supportive evidence.

Plebiscite – what is it?

- SA Government is asking people within the District Council of Grant and City of Mount Gambier the following question:

Do you support the examination of the amalgamation of District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier into a single council?

- The ‘plebiscite’, or direct vote by members of the community, is the process being used to get an answer to this question.
- The Electoral Commission SA (ECSA) is conducting the plebiscite in each of the councils at the same time as the 2022 council election.

How can you have your say?

- You will receive a ballot paper in your council elections ballot pack
- These are being distributed by ECSA starting Friday 14 October
- Complete the ballot paper and return it in the envelope before 5pm Thursday 10 November

City of Mount Gambier Poll

QUESTION

Do you support the examination of an amalgamation of the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier to form a single council?

BACKGROUND

The State Government is considering whether it is appropriate to refer a proposal to amalgamate the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier to the Local Government Boundaries Commission (the Boundaries Commission) to undertake a formal inquiry.

The Boundaries Commission is an independent body that assesses and investigates council boundary change proposals, including amalgamations.

The question being asked in this plebiscite will assist the State Government to better understand the level of community support for an inquiry. It will help the State Government to decide whether to refer a proposal to amalgamate the two councils, to the Boundaries Commission.

If the response to the plebiscite is positive, a proposal will be referred to the Boundaries Commission, who will then undertake a thorough and independent inquiry into it, before making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government on any (or no) boundary change in the area. The Commission's independent recommendations will be based on full public consultation and extensive analysis of relevant issues, and which in its view, are in the best interests of the communities of the two Councils.

If an inquiry proceeds, the South Australian Productivity Commission will also be requested to inquire into the economic benefits and opportunities of the potential amalgamation to inform the Boundaries Commission's recommendations.

Before making a decision whether or not to refer a proposal for amalgamation to the Boundaries Commission, the State Government wants to hear the views of the people in the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier.

If the response to this plebiscite is negative, then the State Government will not refer the proposal to the Boundaries Commission for formal inquiry.

More information on this poll is available at —
dit.sa.gov.au/plebiscite

The Case for Voting Yes

It would indicate to the State Government that a proposal to amalgamate the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier should be examined.

The Case for Voting No

It would indicate to the State Government that a proposal to amalgamate the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier should not be examined.



Returning Officer
Initials

BALLOT PAPER

MTGP01

City of Mount Gambier Poll

QUESTION

Do you support the examination of an amalgamation of the District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier to form a single council?

DIRECTIONS

For your vote to count you must vote by placing a tick (✓) in the box of your choice.

☐ YES

☐ NO

After voting, detach the ballot paper and follow the instructions in the 'Returning Your Ballot Paper' section of Your Voting Guide.

What will happen after the vote?

- Voting closes 5pm Thursday 10 November
- Counting of ballots will occur on Saturday 12 November
- Positive result is a majority (more than 50% of people voting across the two council areas responding 'yes')
- Results will be publicly released by ECSA. They will show:
 - How many people voted 'yes' or 'no' in each council area; and
 - How many people voted 'yes' or 'no' in each of the District Council of Grant's three wards
- If a majority of people who respond vote 'yes' the SA Government will refer a proposal to investigate the amalgamation to the Local Government Boundaries Commission.

Who is the Boundaries Commission?

- The Boundaries Commission is an independent body established under the [*South Australian Local Government Grants Commission Act 1992*](#).
- Their role is to oversee investigations, and make recommendations to the Minister for Local Government in relation to council amalgamations.

Who is the Boundaries Commission?

- Three members, appointed by the Governor on a part time basis:
 - Chair: Rob Donaldson
 - Commissioner: Wendy Campana
 - Commissioner: Erika Vickery
- Website:

dit.sa.gov.au/local-government/boundaries-commission

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN			
L	G	B	C
LOCAL	GOVERNMENT	BOUNDARIES	COMMISSION
			
	Rob Donaldson Chair	Wendy Campana Commissioner	Erika Vickery Commissioner
	Joint nominee of the Local Government Association and Minister for Planning and Local Government	Nominee of the Minister for Planning and Local Government	Nominee of the Local Government Association

The South Australian Local Government Boundaries Commission is an independent statutory authority established under the *South Australian Local Government Grants Commission Act 1992*.

What will they do?

- Responsibilities and procedures are set out in the [Local Government Act 1999](#)
- The Boundaries Commission must consider the objects and principles set out in the Local Government Act. They must also consider:
 - Financial implications and impact on resources of the council
 - The extent of support within the community
 - The extent of support of the councils
 - The impact of the rights/interests of council employees

What will they do?

- Other matters they may consider include:
 - Division of assets and liabilities
 - Impact of any significant contracts
 - Community access to services and any differences in services levels provided by the two councils
 - Communication between councils and communities
 - Assessment of differences in rating policies of the councils
 - Implications for employees, including transfer of staff and conditions of employment

What will they do?

- Will be assisted by an investigator (or investigators)
- Councils must be consulted on appointment of investigator(s)
- Must undertake consultation with councils, their communities and entities that represent council employees.
- Engagement plan which includes:
 - Engagement objectives
 - Analysis of key stakeholders
 - Engagement activities and timing
- Engagement process provides the opportunity for community members and the councils to provide input to the investigation

What role will the Productivity Commission play?

- If the investigation proceeds, the State Government will ask the Productivity Commission to consider the economic benefits and opportunities of the amalgamation.
- This work will be provided to the Boundaries Commission to inform its investigation and recommendations.

What happens once the Boundaries Commission finishes its investigation?

- The Boundaries Commission will publish a report that includes recommendations.
- The report will be provided to the Minister for Local Government.
- The recommendations will depend on the findings from the investigation.
- The Boundaries Commission does not have to say 'yes' or 'no' to the proposal to amalgamate the two councils.

Who makes the final decision?

- The Minister for Local Government will receive the Boundaries Commission report and recommendations
- The Minister will determine whether or not the amalgamation should proceed.

Summary

- Plebiscite is a 'yes' or 'no' vote by members of the District Council of Grant and City of Mount Gambier to the question:
Do you support the examination of the amalgamation of District Council of Grant and the City of Mount Gambier into a single council?
- A simple majority – more than 50% of the people voting across to the two council areas = a positive result
- If a positive result the SA Government will refer a proposal to amalgamate the two councils to the SA Boundaries Commission
- The Boundaries Commission will conduct an investigation, including consultation and engagement with the affected communities

Summary

- The Boundaries Commission will provide a report to the Minister for Local Government
- The Minister will determine whether or not the proposal may proceed

Key dates

- Ballot papers were distributed commencing from Friday 14 October
- Voting closes 5pm Thursday 10 November
- Vote count will occur on Saturday 12 November

Websites

- dit.sa.gov.au/plebiscite
- dit.sa.gov.au/local-government/boundaries-commission

Questions?

